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Marriage Customs of the Babemba Tribe
(Le Mariage Chez les Babemba)

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MARRIAGE CUSTOMS OF THE BABEMBA TRIBES

The tribe in question is that of the Babemba. The Babemba have their own history, thus it is an important tribe. They claim to have come originally from the Lunda kingdom. It is well known that the Lunda, situated on the upper reaches of the Kasaï River, a tributary of the Congo, is one of the biggest and most powerful negro kingdoms of Africa. The Balunda established their rule over all the neighboring tribes, thus founding three big colonies which go by the name of Baluba. The first of these colonies was established at the source of the Zambezi River, partly in Portuguese Angola, partly in British Northern Rhodesia. This first colony was later conquered by the Matabeles who had originally come from Zululand. It took the name of Barotseland. The second Baluba colony was established further east between the Kasaï and Sankuru rivers, while the third of the Baluba colonies settled on the banks of the Lualaba, another tributary of the Congo. The Babemba (Baluba) came from this last colony. 101 175

Their migration took place about 200 years ago. The story of this migation is one of the most impressive in history. The exodus lasted for nearly ten years— the tribe first crossed the Luapula, Chambezi and Luangwa rivers; but then they turned back and again crossed the Chambezi River further north, and finally settled on the banks of the Karungu River, nine kilometers (five and a half miles) north of the present-day missionary settlement of Malole. There they came upon a related tribe by the name of Babemba. The Baluba superseded them entirely by appropriating their territory and bringing them into subjection. The two races soon merged. The Baluba ceased to be Baluba and were henceforth called Babemba. 167 175 [728] [101]

Since their exodus from Baluba, the Babemba have had about thirty kings each with his history—and a glorious history at that. The most illustrious page in their history describes their wars with the invading hordes of the Baangonis of Zulu origin. While all the neighboring tribes yielded and paid tribute to the Baangoni, the Babemba gloriously withstood the terrible assaults of the formidable enemy. The war lasted for ten years (from 1860 to [210/1870]). Finally, in the course of a decisive battle the Babemba won complete victory. Singadiaba, the great Mungoni chieftain, died from grief over this defeat. His army was completely disorganized, and the 175 [643]

175 Baangoni had to give up their plan to subjugate the Babembas. They turned towards Tabora. After their victory over the Baangoni, the Babemba on the other hand, carried the war into the territories of their cowardly neighbors, whom they subjugated and ruled with an [797] iron hand. When Mgr. Dupont came to the terrible kingdom of the Babemba for the first time, the tribe had established its rule over a territory which was twice the size of the present Vicarage. The neighboring tribes would tremble at the mere mention of the word [648] Babemba. Even today we can hear songs cursing the cruelty of the Babemba among the tribes of Tanganyika and Broken Hill.

161 The present population of the Babemba is about 100, 000. The wars of the past have decimated them.

181 The most outstanding characteristic of the Babemba is that they are a war-like tribe to the highest degree, dreaming only of pillage, battle, submission of neighboring tribes, imposition of overburdening tributes, expansion and aggrandizement of the kingdom, but all this by means of a civil and military organization which is indeed remark- [157] able. The Babemba are one of the most intelligent races of Africa. [193] They have an exceedingly rich language including more than 20, 000 [538] words; they have a literature of their own consisting of martial poetry, songs of all kinds, more than 1500 proverbs, several hundred riddles, about a thousand axioms, etc.; a treasure bequeathed by their ancestors

157 In mining centers the Babembas are known for their keenness [zeal], their polite manners, their respect for authority, and their spirit of initiative.

484 My picture would not be complete if I did not mention the fact that the Babemba of today are perhaps the greatest adventurers of Central Africa. You meet Babemba everywhere. There are Babemba in Zanzibar, Panda, Lindi, Bulawayo, in Broken Hill, the Belgian Congo, in Transvaal and on the Cape. The Mubemba does not find it difficult to move; he can take care of himself, and he is at home everywhere.

584 ENGAGEMENT [Kukobeka]: Engagement takes place at an early age, around ten or twelve years, when the young betrothed are not yet nubile [amabele tayalakula]. [21]

Consent: An emissary [Shibukombe], who does not belong to the clan of those who wish to become engaged, is chosen. He is a man who enjoys a certain amount of prestige in the village and can speak out

plainly. The young man who desires to become engaged lives with his parents; the young girl lives with her mother. The fiancé buys the fiancée with a present /mpango, nsalamu/, which usually consists of copper or ivory bracelets /nsambo, makosa/, or beads /bulungu/. The parents tell the emissary that their son is already grownup and wishes to marry a certain girl. They explain to him that they have met /kuishibana/. The emissary rises and takes the presents to the young girl's parents; he explains the purpose of his coming. Then all the kinsmen of this clan /mukowa/ meet in the hut of the young girl's parents in order to give their opinion with regard to consent and in this manner to avoid any possible difficulties which might arise later /pa kuti babâfwe ko ukusumina uyu mwaume, bekasosa limbi, fikanasa nda fyaisa limbi abati: ifwe tatwali ko nga twalikene mwaume/. When everyone has agreed and consented to the engagement, they tell the emissary: "We agree, let the young man come here and be betrothed to our daughter" /Chisuma naese ope, natutemwa/. The emissary rises and returns to the young man's parents' home. He tells them what has been decided /abeda no mo ere umfwila mulandu/. The father and mother tell their son: "Go and get your tree-bark fabrics which you must offer as a present" /filundu/. 584

Filundu. The fiancé's father has previously manufactured two filundu (costumes of ficus bark). He gives them to the emissary to seal the engagement alliance. The latter places them in a basket, along with the beads and other presents, and returns to the parents of the fiancée. If everyone consents again, the engagement pact is concluded. The parents of the fiancée then take possession of the presents /kulya mpango/, the maternal uncle /nalume/ takes possession of one of the two filundu, while the father takes the other costume. [24?]

Engagement Banquet at the House of the Fiancé: /kutebeta/. The fiancé's parents try to obtain a chicken; they kill it. They then have plenty of flour ground. They prepare an enormous amount of mush /bwali/ and a big bowl of seasoning /munani/ with beans /chilemba/ and spinach /musalu/. This is another occasion for offering presents /kushikula/: they place one bracelet on the bwali, another on /212/ the chicken, and the beads are placed in the pitcher which contains water for washing hands. As a mark of respect the food is always covered by a basket /balakupika po/. They also invite several kinswomen, who bring food in small covered baskets /fyakupikwa/. [262] [576]

Then the Shibukombe (emissary) is invited, whose job it is to uncover the covered baskets. In payment for his work he may take all the small presents placed on top of the food /no tuntu toonse tulya bashikwile pa bwali, fyakwe/. 584

Period Between the Engagement and Nubility: /kukûba/. During the period preceeding nubility the fiancée often goes to her fiancé's hut in order to do small chores, such as sweeping, lighting the fire, drawing water or whitewashing the house. These chores are supposed to reveal to the fiancé the devotion and skill of his future wife /kuchichila/. Furthermore, she will live in her fiancé's house for a considerable time in order to show that she is docile /kupetama/. 583

When his fiancée is on the eve of menstruation, the fiancé goes to live with his father-in-law /shifyala/. He does several favors for him. As a token of respect, the food which is offered him is always covered by a basket. His bwali will be offered him uncovered only on the day when the Shibukombe is invited to uncover the wedding bwali, before which the latter will pour water for him to wash his hands /kusambikisha/, and after having whitened the spot where the fiancé washed his hands (nsoni shapwa) with clayey soil (kushingula). [576]

Chisungu (Menstruation). In the forest. When the fiancée has her first period, /kuwa chisungu/, she runs to hide in the forest. After finding her, her kinswomen collect around her in order to make certain of the fact /bamukunsha/. They then break small branches from the trees, and while dancing they sing as follows: "We have gone to tell the little spotted lion-cub that his master has come" /Twaire sobera nkalamo ya mabala chibinda taluba/. They then go to the fiancé's house, and place their branches on the roof saying: "Nshimba, nshimba" (wild cat). From this moment on, the fiancé takes the name of shichisungu, and the fiancée, nachisungu. 88

At home. Then the women go to find the nachisungu (the nubile fiancée) in the forest, and after having submitted her to various /213/ tests, such as jumping across a bundle of fire-wood or drinking water from a jug which contains small tadpoles, they carry her back to her home on their shoulders. The fiancée's father leaves his hut and goes to stay elsewhere. Henceforth there will be the mako [784]

taboo between him and his daughter. The nubile fiancée then lives with her mother in complete seclusion for an entire month. This is the kuingisha chisungu, literally, to make certain of the marriage-ability. The girl's mother ceases to wash and bathe herself /kuoa/; the girl stops shaving her hair /kubea/. 881 [784]

The Menstruation Dance. /Kuimba chisungu/. This phase is also called the kufumie chisungu, which means in honor of the nubile maiden. Ordinarily this ceremony takes place in June or July, when the "eleusin" /Translator's note: raggee, a cereal grass/ is ripe. This is a time of plenty and beer. The kinswomen of the young girl invite the nachimbusa (the female director of this ceremony). As a token of the invitation, they give her a present /lusomo/, such as a chicken, for example. 881 535

From the moment when dancing in honor of the nubile girl begins, all sweeping of the hut must cease, and only the throwing of ashes /mito/ into the mupunda (space between the door and the hall on the left of the entrance) may take place. The women then go to fetch the nakalamba, whose task it is to invite the other women to come and dance, sing and beat the drum. She is not shaved and must be white with dust /abuta tutu/. These are the words she uses for the invitation: "Companions, help me in my task" /Bamayo, ngafweni ko mulimo/. All the women assemble in the hut. The director /nachimbusa/ is the one who gives the sign for the singing to begin. Everyone falls in with the refrain by beating the drum or dancing. The nachimbusa, who also dances, is clothed in a genet skin and wears a tuft of feathers as head-gear. She sings: "Chimbusa chikulu chienda ne ngala" (I am the director who walks with her head covered by a tuft of feathers). The dance begins at about sundown and ends towards dawn. The songs for this dance are extremely varied, some innocent and praising, others equivocal and often obscene. They dance like this for an entire month. Food is brought in daily in order to give strength to those who are dancing. [292] [302] [292]

The Beer. After the month of "menstruation dancing" is over, the local beer is prepared in large quantities. It is offered to the fiancé's mother. Early in the morning after the night when the beer was prepared, the /214/ women flock to the fiancée's house for the mbusa. They split into two groups; while some go to fetch white clay (mpemba) others gather fire-wood (nkuni). 273 881

Mbusa (preparation in the forest). The women who have gone to the forest cut the flexible branches of the trees (mienge). Then they fashion a sort of termite's nest in which they hide a handful of musuku leaves. A pole is passed through the nest [illegible]. The pole supporting the termite's nest is carried by two women who sing a song in honor of the fiancée: "Mu luendo lulia lwine batebera Na chisungu chifinga cha nkuni." The children also carry bundles of firewood on their backs, after the nakalamba has first annointed them with the red dye of nkula. Then they all come back singing: "Nshimba mulya ya ngombe." The children take up the chorus: "Ngombe isho we ulele, ngombe isho kufula kocho... ." 881

Mbusa (arrival at the village). After returning to the village, they unload the clay and bundles of wood in the hut. The clay will serve to make the fireplace. In this special fireplace, lit with a fresh fire, the famous highly seasoned dish for the wedding is cooked, the namushinwa, consisting of beans, sorghum (millet), chick-peas, lentils, tubers and peas, vegetable marrow and castor. They sing: "Natukalabe Babisa, baleto ku kalaba." [262]

Mbusa (matrimonial symbols). The women put down the white clayey earth, treading it down with charcoal and the red dye of nkula. They put all of it down near the hearth. [386]

The female director of the ceremony /nachimbusa/ then brings in two baskets filled with earthenware mbusa made a long time ago and always used for the same purpose. Please note that the nachimbusa is a sort of priestess whose office is hereditary. It is her job to preside at wedding ceremonies. The mbusa which she uses represent wedding symbols and have various shapes. I was able to purchase some of these mbusa by paying a great deal. Some are shaped like bi-sexual dolls, others are shaped like small vases with spiney walls, yet others resemble flower vases, certain others look like animals, one in the form of a big snail which emits a sound resembling a lion's roar. Once the ceremony /215/ is over, the nachimbusa takes home her mbusa. When she dies, they are buried with her in her grave. During her whole life she carefully hides them in termite nests or under rocks in the river-bed. Here are the names of the various mbusa according to their form or use: chiluwe, chimundu, chimingi posa masamba, chilyobe wa ngoma, mwansa 881 793 [323 532] 552 881

chipepe, mulume wa ngala, chilombo, mangalawila, mwikala chishasha, wingeminino utepauka. 552 881

This is how they proceed. The nachimbusa puts down a large mbusa made of baked clay. It has two paws and is funnel-shaped at the apex; this is the chimundu (big lion). On top of the mbusa she twists flexible tree branches [mienge] into a circle, then coating them with earth [maloba] and giving it the shape of a lion. In the upper cavity she places tufts of plants to imitate the mane; the teeth and eyes are imitated by artistically inserted pumpkin and melon seeds. When it is finished, two women come close, imitating the roar of a lion with special mbusa; the meaning of this is to instruct the future husband as follows: "You, if you abandon your wife and if you go alone to the river, you will be caught by the lion" [Iwe nga ukalalekeresha mukashi, waya ku ifwe eke, ukasumwa ne nkalamo]. Please note here that none of these matrimonial symbols is meant to be immoral. Their purpose is to instruct the future spouses in their duties as husband and wife, to give them courage to cope with the everyday dangers of life in the bush, to incite them to stand up courageously to the difficult tasks to which both of them will be bound. 532 881

Nkuni (firewood). In the course of the day, the women have notified the husband to go and get firewood in the forest. He ties a package [chifunda] containing a small live rat [kapanga mutunturu] to his bundle [chifinga]. This is a sign that his fiancée has not yet slandered him. If he knows that his fiancée has already spoken ill of him, he will not put a rat in the bundle. During this time the women end their mbusa ceremonies. 881

The fiancé is invited. At this time the singing starts and the drums beat more loudly; the women call the fiancé with the following words: "Kalombo, musha, uko uire teba, taulabwela." The fiancé will thereupon appear carrying the bundle of wood on his back. He is accompanied by his sister or a female cousin. As both enter the hut, and the bundle of wood is [216] put down, and dancing in the young girl's honor begins, the nakalamba (i.e. the woman who has invited the neighbors to the celebration) unties the bundle of wood and the package. She then takes two chickens; the fiancée sits on one of them in order to kill it [kufwantikisha], while the nachimbusa sits on the other. Once the chickens have died they are plucked and cooked.

The bow and arrow. At this time the fiancé goes outside and invites his kinsmen to enter. The latter bring a bow and arrow. As soon as they arrive on the threshold, the one who leads them starts a song: "Mushe inama yandi, taibula mwine, walasa..." They all enter. The fiancé stands in the middle of the house drawing the bow and arrow; he is supposed to pierce a special mbusa which the women have fixed on the wall slightly above the place where his future wife is sitting. If he pierces the mbusa, there are shouts of joy: Here is a true fiancé, the girl will be his wife," etc. If he misses, the poor boy is subjected to an avalanche of scolding and cursing: "Chimbi chikesa" (There will be trouble in this household). In this case the fiancé has to submit to tests in order to show them his lack of success with the bow was due to bad luck. 881 [787]

Mwansa chembe (headdress of feathers). If the young man has succeeded in piercing the mbusa, the women take up another mbusa of clay which is set with plumes /ngala/. They use them to make a headgear for the fiancé while singing: "Wamumona Mwansa chembe, mulume wa ngala aisa...", This is to tell him that if he makes his wife suffer, so will he. 881 292

Chinungi (porcupine). The headgear is taken off and a mbusa which is a facsimile of a porcupine is brought up. This spiny mbusa is then attached to the fiancé's neck by means of a cord. The fiancé has to bend down while the women sing: "Chinungi, posa matamba, twairiwa ku isano." Then they take it off /kukobola/. 881 301

Nsensengwe. This is the fruit of a river tree which causes itching. The women knead this fruit and then rub it on the fiancée's arm with a little brush. From this moment on she ceases to be a young girl and becomes a woman (mukalamba). 884 824

Chitenge. This is a crossbeam attached to the roof inside the house. The fiancé is suspended from it and while he remains thus suspended /alapelela/ the women sing: "Lelo, atema pa chitenge," etc. He jumps down when the song is finished. 881

Mipeto (hoop). The women then make a circle around the fiancé with hoops. The fiancé takes some of the hoops and lets them roll towards his /217/ fiancée. The women sing: "Mulangire alole..." The

fiancé goes home. The fiancée gets up and jumps across several mbusa 881
to the approving shouts of the women.

IMMEDIATE PREPARATIONS FOR THE WEDDING. Questions and Instructions. It is necessary to instruct the fiancée with regard to certain facts pertaining to marriage. Only a few women will be with her; other women wait outside and beat the drum in order to prevent any indiscreet ears from listening to what is said to the fiancée. The nachimbusa and the nakalamba, in particular, question the fiancée on certain details with regard to menstruation. The fiancée has to answer truthfully and make a full confession; a lie could be fatal in these circumstances. The women then give her whatever counsel and advice is deemed desirable.

Beer. Once the meeting is over, an invitation to drink beer is issued 881
/imalwa/. Everyone drinks beer: relatives, neighbors, friends. The 273
drinking and dancing last through the night.

Kuoa (the bath). At dawn the women accompany the fiancée to the 881
river; they take along some mbusa and sing: "Naya ku kuabika nkwa, 515
mairo kusala kuli ko." When they arrive at the river, they put the fiancée in the middle of the current, even if it is very cold. She has to stay there until the sun rises. The women then take her out of her river bed and wash her. They then braid the grass bracelets which they put around her wrists and ankles while singing: "This is how your [201]
husband will give you bracelets." They pick tall grass to make a kind of tuft /nsonshi/ from it, which they put on her head. While pouring water over the top of it, they sing: "Euma" (may she never be dry).

Ashes. When they return to the house, they find that the nakalamba 881
has swept away the ashes, which have not been swept since the fiancée started having her period. These ashes are thrown under a tree called mufungo, whose fruit is delicious. This is to insure that the marriage [824]
of the two be a good one /kunakilila/. Then a basket full of filundu (tree bark garments) is brought in. This is another of the fiancé's presents. The women rub the fiancée with oil until she is streaming. The fiancé does the same. Then the women dress the fiancée /218/ as well as her younger sister /nshindishi/ with all the filundu; this is the moment for presenting the gifts in the public square.

Mashikulo (presents). The fiancée, adorned in her most beautiful garments, is lead out from the bush; she is backed by women attendants who sing: "Waleleka, mayo, waemba, waemba mune." (Oh,

companion, thou art beautiful, thou art elegant.) The women then make her sit down on a mat in the middle of the courtyard. The fiancé presents his gifts. He is accompanied by friends and relatives. At the end of the ceremony the fiancée is brought back home. Then the nachimbusa is given great quantities of food in payment of her work [imali]. Moreover, the nachimbusa takes all the filundu off the fiancée and appropriates them, except for what she gives to the nakalamba. Henceforth the fiancée remains alone with her mother. Her fiancé gives her two other filundu. Thus ends the chisungu ceremony. 881

WEDDING. Mpango (wedding presents). For the wedding proper other gifts are prepared. For this purpose, the shibukombe is again invited. The fiancé's father says to him: "Take these presents and give them to the fiancée's parents." The shibukombe carries out the order. The fiancée's father says: "It is agreed from now on my daughter may be his wife." Beer, bwali and chickens are then carried in. When everything is ready [pekanya], the father-in-law says to the shibukombe "Tell my son-in-law to tell his mother about it." In the evening, the fiancée's paternal aunt [nasenge] is invited to the house. 585

At the fiancé's. In the evening, the nasenge goes to fetch the fiancée, her niece, and carrying her on her back [amupapa], she brings her into the fiancé's hut. When she has brought her inside, she tells her: "Kakula mushingo," etc. Whereupon she goes outside but stays near the hut.

Instructions. Immediately the fiancé goes out to receive instructions from the elders. After this instruction, the husband is given two ivory ornaments with which he is to rub his body all night long. The spouses must not scrape their nails with tupande tubili, for this would cause the nails to grow out of proportion and fall out [koboloka] as well as to make the entire body rot [ondoloka]. They also have been admonished not to blow on the fire in order to fan the flame, as this would cause them to waste away. Someone else must light and maintain the fire during this night. 585 784

Actus matrimonialis. The fiancé returns to this hut, where he is awaited [219] by the fiancée and ubi faciunt actus conjugalis (where the marriage is consumated.) If they succeed, they throw burning firewood outside. All the witnesses waiting in the courtyard utter 585

cries of joy: "Abantu abengi baisa, bayaula kapundu, balakakasha, balasempula abati: mulennisha, mulenaisha, muletemesha." If there is no success, silence reigns in the house. At dawn the nasenge (paternal aunt) comes to pick up the unhappy wife and takes her home. This means that the marriage is broken. The crowds who have gathered to celebrate disperse again. (Cases of impotent husbands are rather rare. On the other hand I have heard of cases where the husband was rendered impotent by drugs /miti/ which had been mixed in his food. I know of a verified case right here at Malolé.) 585 833 757

Kuoa (the bath). Once the sexual act has been accomplished, the two spouses get up and at dawn they go to the river. The husband places himself upstream, the wife downstream, as they wash. After the bath they both return to their hut. They find that the hearth fire has been thrown out and that the center of the hut has been whitewashed. They will remain seated without fire. 515 585

Lunweno (small vessel). The nasenge comes up holding a small earthenware lunweno in her hand. She lights a new fire near the foot of the bed /ntambalilo/, where she places three small ant nests /tumafwasa/ to hold up the small vessel. Together the three of them (aunt, husband and wife) pick up the small vessel full of water, holding it by the rim with two fingers, and place it on the fire. They wait until the water starts to boil. The aunt /nasenge/ then draws a little water by means of a very small ladle and pours some of it over the hands of both husband and wife. 585

Kabwali (a small meal). Then the aunt, who has previously brought along some flour, prepared a small meal for the two. When the bwali is cooked, she takes a mouthful /lutoshi/ or a pellet and tosses one into the mouth of each. The spouses then may finish the bwali by themselves. Meanwhile the little vessel remains on the fire until the fire goes out. Before taking it off /ipula/, a present must be found for the aunt who has lent the vessel. The couple give her a chirundu, or mat. Then she takes back her vessel, replacing it by another, called the kanongo.

Kanongo or Kapalwilo. The aunt brings this new little vessel saying: "Eko muleumina ko," i.e., when the couple must /220/ have sexual intercourse, they take bow, arrows and hatchet out of the hut. Together they put water into the little vessel and repeat the preceding ceremony. 585 834

Ku bea (shaving). Then razors are brought in to shave their hair. 585
The nachimbusa shaves the wife, the shibukombe, the husband. They [302]
are then annointed with oil for the great mashikulo ceremony.

Mashikulo (Presents and Instructions). Preparation. A mat is spread 585
out on the square, on which a small seat /chipuna/ is placed with a child, a little boy and a little girl, sitting on either side. These two children hold up the little seat with their hands. A parade hatchet /sembe lya mbafi/ is also brought.

The women fetch the wife /nabwinga/, who is dressed up, from the hut and place her on the mat. The men fetch the husband /shibwinga/ leading him by the arm. He sits down on the chipuna next to his wife and between the two children /nshindishi/. He holds the hatchet in his hand. The nachimbusa takes a bow and places it on the wife's legs. Then shouts of joy are uttered by all the villagers, and everybody exclaims: "Bashichisungu bafuma." Everybody gathers together.

Recommendations. The fiancée's father steps forward holding an arrow 585
in his hand, and addresses his daughter with the following words: "My 837
daughter, I give you this man, whom you have known, the one who comes to you at night /kuirwa/ is this man; it is bad for the wife to go to other husbands at night /kuirirwa/.... do not cast your eyes upon other men." He then turns to his son-in-law and says to him: "You are my son-in-law, I recognize you, you are the one who has married my daughter." He then stabs his skin slightly with an arrow shouting: "If anyone takes advantage of your wife, you will kill him and he will be unable to defend himself." The chieftains will declare him a "ngulube" who died because he wanted to steal. "Tatusamba nweno shibili" (One does not wash two wedding vessels), i.e. marriage is one [581]
and indissoluble.

Then it is the turn of the wife's mother to step forward and give 581
advice: "My daughter, be faithful in working for and obeying your 585
husband." She then turns /pindulukira/ to her son-in-law and says to him: "Take care of me and also your wife, do not cast your eyes on other women. The husband must keep his eyes on the road where his wife treads.... /22/ if he notices that she is late in coming, he must go to meet her as a sign of conjugal love."

Other members of the respective families also rise to give their advice. All of them must then offer the couple a number of presents. Once the mashikulo are over, the married couple is taken back to their hut for the love-feast /kusonsha/. 585

Kusonsha (love-feast). Back at the hut, the big banquet begins. A piece of chicken gizzard /kanondo/ is placed on the husband's mouth and then thrown away. A second piece of gizzard, dipped in gravy, is then given to the husband, who eats it this time. The same ceremony is repeated for the wife. Two bwali (thick gruel)have been prepared, one by the husband's mother, the other by the wife's mother, and they are exchanged as a sign of affection. Everyone then starts to eat a great deal, except for the married couple. The latter will not leave their hut for the rest of the day. They do this in honor of the wedding. The people say: "Bali mu mfundwe."

For the husband this wife is called the "kapundu." If she happend to die, and the widower wished to marry another nubile girl, the ceremony would be simplified. There would be no offering of wedding presents /mashikulo/. A pagan chief who may marry several wives, would go through this ceremony only with his first wife /kapundu/, who would become the "mukolo" when the chief started to take other wives who are called "mwinga." 581 587